Centennial Essay

100 Years of *Social Forces* as seen through Bibliometric Publication Patterns

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The 100th anniversary of *Social Forces* provides a rich opportunity to reflect on the history of the journal and changes to sociology as a whole. Using a series of formal text-analytic methods, we describe the shifting intellectual landscape of *Social Forces* publications. We uncover a wide diversity of topics that shift over time reflecting the breadth of interests engaging sociologists as *Social Forces* grew into one of the discipline's premier journals. In addition to shifts in content, we examine changes in sociological work during this century. We find that articles have generally become more interdisciplinary, while being produced by larger, more gender inclusive and globalized teams. We examine both the most cited papers in *Social Forces* as well as factors associated with greater recognition. The overall story implied by these explorations suggests a vibrant journal that has shaped the way that sociology has worked over the last 100 years.

Introduction

The 100-year anniversary of *Social Forces* is both a remarkable milestone and an excellent opportunity to reflect on the history of sociology, as represented in this journal. In that spirit, Editor Kalleberg asked us to perform a bibliometric analysis of articles published in *Social Forces* to provide a "30,000-foot" overview of the main publication trends and patterns and to help set the stage for the commissioned deeper, topic-specific reviews. We approach this problem using bibliometric text network methods (Edelmann, Moody, and Light 2017; Light and Adams 2016; Moody and Light 2006) to describe the "intellectual

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landscape" represented in *Social Forces* and to analyze how the journal has changed over time.

Both the form and content of publications in *Social Forces* have changed over the last 100 years. The nuanced nature and development of the various research fields reflected in these publications will be taken up by the special reviews published on each topic. But, at a high level, *Social Forces* publications have shifted from short reports on local investigations and issues related to the institutionalization of a new discipline—including heated debates about the meaning of that effort—to focused, methodologically sophisticated empirical investigations. Projects and authorship teams now routinely span the globe, bridge methodological divides, engage in broad interdisciplinary conversations, and run the full gamut of sociological approaches.

After describing the general methods and data sources, we first identify topics *Social Forces* authors write about based on the content of their publications and describe shifts in topical emphasis over time. This "intellectual landscape" provides the basic motif we use to organize the rest of the paper. Using trends in citations, we complement *what* authors write about with *who they draw on* most, then turn from content to form, profiling changes in authorship patterns and stylistic writing features. We conclude by examining factors that lead *Social Forces* papers to be highly cited.

The review demonstrates that the central role *Social Forces* has played in sociology over the last century with contributions cross-cutting all of the major substantive fields that make this discipline so intellectually rich. The journal has become more international, collaborative, and interdisciplinary and has adjusted focus to address the major scientific and social concerns of the day. If the dynamism of the last century is any indication, hopes are high for the next 100 years of *Social Forces*.

Data and Methods

We use the *Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection* as our primary data source. To fill in where the WoS data are incomplete, we complement with information from *Scopus*, *JSTOR,* and *Sociological Abstracts*. We exclude book reviews and editorial material but otherwise include notes and comments as articles. WoS sometimes misclassifies long articles as "reviews," and short articles as "letters," both of which we also include here as articles. We do this to cast the widest possible net, resulting in a total sample of 6,305 papers. To identify topics, we use text from the abstract, title, and keywords to summarize each article. Not all papers include abstracts, but *Scopus* and *Sociological Abstracts* do provide some for papers as early as 1940, allowing us to include these earlier works. The abstract-limited sample has 4,517 papers. The indexes do contain name errors (limits to first initials, for example) and other oddities; for observing broad trends in topics and publication patterns, such errors and omissions are likely nonconsequential. But, for detailed rankings, there is always a chance that one's favorite paper will have been missed or that a ranking might be different had indexing been more complete.

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Text Network Methods

Computational text analysis is an approach used to explore large bodies of text in ways that cannot be done by simply reading the text, often because the corpus is too large, but also to find similarities across texts that are otherwise difficult to uncover (Mohr 1998; Light 2014). The methods we use are largely contemporary variants of explicit content analysis (Krippendorff 2003). Like all explicit content analyses, there can be slippage between a term used and the meaning we attribute to it. We do our best to note this at points where it might matter but caution that the risk is inherent in any explicit counting method. In this regard, the deep essays by subfield experts are welcome complements.

We identify topics by constructing a network, where papers are nodes linked by the similarity of their texts. This approach was initially developed in library science (He 1999; Law et al. 1988) and used in prior work on sociology (Moody and Light 2006) and wider science studies (Edelmann, Moody, and Light 2017). We expand on standard co-word models by using modern language-aware text-parsing tools that allow us to identify when different terms have the same root ("inequality" and "inequalities"), part of speech, noun groups ("role structure" or "military industrial complex"), and formal entities, such as proper nouns. The intuition behind these models is that papers are similar to the extent that they share differentiating terms, with comparatively rare terms counting more heavily than very common terms as implemented by the "term-frequency, inverse-document frequency" (tf-idf) weighting scheme (Jones 1972). In a first step, we calculate a vector for each paper that captures how frequently the paper uses each meaningful term. In a second step, we calculate a similarity score for each pair of papers as the cosine between their vectors. Two papers that use the same set of meaningful terms will thus have a similarity score of 1, while those with no overlap in terms will have a score of 0.

Once constructed, we cluster the network using a well-vetted clustering algorithm (Blondel et al. 2008). This results in each paper being assigned to a single primary cluster, though linkages outside that cluster are common. We review each cluster manually to ensure (1) internal consistency and (2) external differentiation, splitting or merging clusters, respectively, if they are inconsistent. For the resulting clusters, we inspect its most highly weighted terms and name it accordingly. See Appendix table A1 for full list of highly weighted terms found in each cluster.[1]

We then visualize the clustered network using a technique that places papers near each other if they share many terms (Fruchterman and Reingold 1991). Given the porous nature of content in sociology, many papers have links outside the main cluster they are assigned to—papers primarily on occupational mobility, for example, might also include discussions of gender or race inequality. The balance of these sorts of ties places clusters more proximate to those that they share many ties with.[2] Overall orientation (up/down; right/left) is not meaningful in such maps but proximity denotes similarity. As large dense networks are difficult to visualize as points-and-lines, we abstract to a two-dimensional kernel density—a "contour sociogram," (Light and Moody 2020)—to identify regions

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in the space that have many closely related papers. Text labels for each cluster are placed at its median *x-y* coordinate, which corresponds to denser peaks in the underlying contour space.

Results

Social Forces Intellectual Landscape

Figure 1 provides the intellectual landscape of *Social Forces* from 1940 to 2020. The clustering routine described above results in 39 clusters (Appendix table A1.1). The topics identified are likely familiar and we will discuss prominent clusters in broad terms. We **bold** the name of each topic cluster in the section where it is discussed the most. While the clustering routine does not explicitly account for time, time emerges as one key organizing factor given linguistic and topical changes to the discipline of sociology over this period. Therefore, the discussion below follows the average age of each cluster, divided into 4 broad historical periods: Early topics (pre-1960s), middle period (1960s and 1970s), continuous coverage (average publication date in the 1970s and 1980s, but no real-time trend), and recent growth. Within each period, we discuss areas that are closely related to each other. Importantly, since most of the topics appear in multiple time periods, we discuss within topic changes over time. We also note that time is not the sole organizing factor and the temporal dimension is primarily an organizing heuristic.

Early Topics: War, Regional Service, and World Order

Six clusters had their peak popularity in the 1940s and 1950s. Our corpus of abstracts starts in 1940, so perhaps, it is not surprising that there is a bulk of papers related to regional power structures, war, and an early form of what will later be called globalization. These papers are dealing with issues directly confronting **regionalism and war** (1.3 percent of total) and the rise of nationalism in Europe, with representative[3] titles such as "Democracy Misunderstood: Authoritarian Notions of Democracy Around the Globe" (Kirsch and Welzel 2019) or "Regionalism and Permanent Peace" (Moore 1944). Papers in this cluster have a distinct comparative historical tone, often drawing on classical social theory ("Historical Materialism and Its Sociological Critics," Guthrie 1941).

The regionalism cluster has a strong overlap with early works on **community** (1.9 percent). The collection of papers here is fairly diverse, but the most common terms in the set are "community" (as a noun) and "leadership." Papers often focus on rural life, such as "Family Life in a Rural Community" (Alexander 1940). We also see a handful of more general works about studying community, such as "A Contribution to the Theory of Participant Observation" (Kolaja 1956) or "The Study of Institutions" (Hughes 1942). Recent work includes Lyson, Torres, and Welsh (2001) on agricultural production and community welfare.

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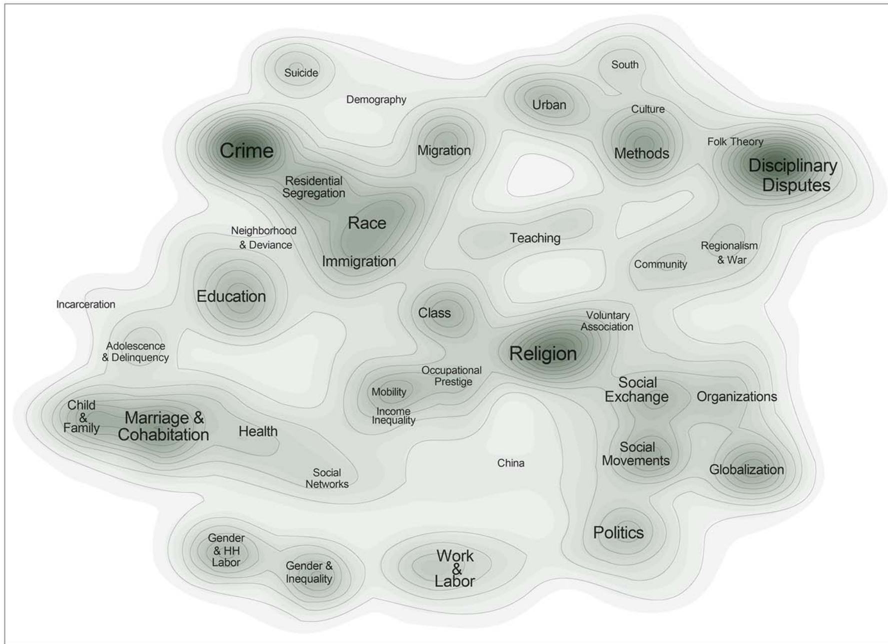
Figure 1. ***Social Forces*** **Intellectual Landscape (1940–2020).**



Note: This figure is a contour sociogram of the *Social Forces* paper topic similarity network. Contour sociograms provide one way of visualizing densely connected networks with many nodes. Our approach places papers on similar topics closer to one another, which also places clusters on similar topics close together. We fit a two-dimensional kernel-density estimate for the number of papers at each point in the space, so clusters emerge as "hills" in the landscape, labeled at their peaks. Label font size is proportional to cluster size.

To the "north" of the clusters on regionalism and community are clusters on the **South** (1 percent) and **culture** (1.7 percent), which made up a good portion of papers published in the 1940s and 1950s. As a journal founded in a southern university and serving the *Southern Sociological Society*, something of a regional focus was natural for *Social Forces*. Some of the work echoes the studies-of-place that we find in the community cluster (with which it is highly cross-linked), with titles such as "Industrial Trends in the Tennessee Valley" (Copeland and McPherson 1946) or "Where the South Begins" (Zelinsky 1951), but others are using the South as a lens for wider sociological questions, such as Heberle's (1946) "A Sociological Interpretation of Social Change in the South" or Reed's (1976) "The Heart of Dixie." There is clear evidence of the consistent engagement with questions of cultural differences between White and Black communities, African American integration, and civil rights struggles in the South (e.g., Adams 1947; Tumin 1958). The regional focus has declined as *Social Forces* became a national journal with broad recognition and concern, but even

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today, the focus on the US South has not been lost entirely, such as in Baker (2020) "Why is the American South Poorer?"

The early papers generally use "**culture**" in either a geographic sense, such as "Regionalism and Cultural Unity in Brazil" (Wagley 1948) or "Rural Latin American Culture" (Davidson 1947), or a norms/institutions sense, such as "An Inductive Study of the Nature of Culture" (Blumenthal 1954) or "Recent Changes in Washington Alley Slums" (Sellew and Nuesse 1948). The study of culture as social production or meaning has increased recently, and we certainly see some of that work in this cluster—e.g., Schmutz's and Faupel's (2010) "Gender and Cultural Consecration in Popular Music" or Light's and Odden's (2017) "Managing the Boundaries of Taste"—however, these papers do not make up the same share of this topic as the early work on global cultures or culture as values and norms.

One of the largest and most diverse clusters bridges work on culture, south, region, and community, which we call **disciplinary disputes** (6.7 percent) though one could also characterize these as papers on the sociology of science or as self-reflective works on that status of the discipline. The most common terms here are "scientific," "human," "discipline," and "scientist," and these are often programmatic papers on a type of sociology, or general social theory, or papers that defend and compare sociology relative to other disciplines. This is where one generally sees the founding nature of early sociological work, struggling over what the discipline is and where the boundaries of a rapidly growing discipline are, though it is something of a perennial topic that never fades entirely. Titles include "On Narrative and Sociology" (Reed 1989), "Possibilities of a Sociology of Science" (Gittler 1940), or "Is Sociology the Integrative Discipline in the Study of Human Behavior?"(Gove 1995). Papers that provide summaries of a particular theorist are located here as well (e.g., Kolb 1944; Bernard 1946; Remmling 1961; Ritzer and Bell 1981).

Teaching (1.9 percent), the last cluster in this era, focuses on sociology's role within the university system.[4] Works here frequently address some aspect of teaching as a vocation. This cluster is also reflexive and consciously about sociology as a field, with titles such as "Introductory Sociology in the Southeastern States: 1950" (Ferriss 1951) and "Research-oriented Teaching of the Course in the Family" (Gladden 1953). The self-reflective nature of some of the work here generates strong links with the "disciplinary disputes" cluster, while the explicit use of school-related terms (e.g., "education," "classroom," and "university") creates strong links to the wider (and larger) cluster on education, which is more closely related to contemporary work on stratification. The teaching cluster thus stretches across the intellectual landscape, with work on the "west" side of the figure more closely engaging questions about race differences in pedagogy and education (Himes 1952; Thompson 1958).

We include two clusters in the early period—"urban" and "race" that are clearly contemporaneously relevant but had a larger share of works in the early history of the journal. Papers in the **urban** cluster focus on issues such as "The Process of Urbanization" (Tisdaly 1942), "Urbanization of the Nonfarm Population" (Firebaugh 1984), or "The Origins of the Food Desert: Urban

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Inequality as Infrastructural Exclusion" (Deener 2017). Research on cities grew alongside the rise of quantitative methods and formal demography, leading to a number of works on measurement and data related to urbanization (e.g., Myers 1954; Forbes and Gromoll 1971).

The topic of **race** (4.4 percent) threads throughout most of the other topics in this map (see Appendix figure A3.1). Papers that focus explicitly on race make up a larger share of earlier papers, likely reflecting the lower disciplinary heterogeneity of the early issues and the contemporary importance of race across research topics. The most common terms in this cluster are "black," "racial," "white," "race relation," "south," and "school," respectively, and topics generally focus on race or race-relations as the core concern. Representative papers include: "A Positive Approach to Race Relations in the South" (Neal 1948), "Racial Discrimination and Negro Leadership Problems" (Bowman 1965), "Assimilation or Marginality?" (Hunt 1977), "Sweet Mothers and Gang-bangers: Managing Crime in a Black Middle-Class Neighborhood" (Patillo 1998), and "The Strength of Whites' Ties" (Silva 2018). Race—along with inequality—is among the most cross-linked clusters with terms related to race found throughout the intellectual landscape.

The Middle Period: Growth of the Stratification and Inequality Core and the Rise of Quantitative Methods

The period from the late 1960s through the late 1970s saw a rise in research on stratification and inequality, through four closely related topics of class, mobility, occupational prestige, and the related income inequality cluster described below (in the section on continuous coverage). At the same time, the self-reflexive theoretical bent in the 1940s gives way to papers on quantitative methodology, focusing on best practices for empirical sociology. The journal also takes on a much wider scope at this point, and notes on teaching in the South or similar largely disappear.

Class (2.7 percent) occupies a uniquely central position in the overall intellectual landscape, reflecting the wider concern with stratification across the corpus. The natural divisions of the language on economic and cultural stratification break out into four related clusters ("class," "occupational prestige," "mobility," and "income inequality" See A3.3). Titles in the class cluster include: "Ideology and Class Consciousness in the Middle Class" (DeGré 1950), "Social Class and Intelligence" (Farber 1965), "Class, Property, and Authority" (Hazelrigg 1972), "Race Versus Class? Racial Composition and Class Voting" (Weakliem 1997), and "Intrinsically Advantageous? Reexamining the Production of Class Advantage In the Case of Home Mortgage Modification" (Owens 2015). The work on **occupational prestige** (1.5 percent) focuses mainly on the ways that class is operationalized through occupation and the stability of prestige patterns, which takes us directly to the work on mobility and on status explicitly: "Status" is the third most common term in this cluster. Representative papers include "Occupational Prestige and Its Correlates" (Garbin and Bates 1961) and "The

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Allocation of Status within Occupations" (Erlanger 1980). **Social mobility** (1.8 percent) rounds out this mid-period trio, with papers such as "Executives and Supervisors: A Situational Theory of Differential Occupational Mobility" (Coates and Pellegrin 1956), "Intragenerational Occupational Mobility and Visiting With Kin and Friend" (Bruce 1970), "Structural Change and Class Mobility in Capitalist Societies" (Robinson 1984), and "Class-structure and Intergenerational Class Mobility" (Western 1994). Terms and models based on mobility, class, and occupation shift over time, with more explicit work on income inequality and gender differences at work taking over later on.

The middle period also sees a rise in work explicitly tackling **methods** (3.4 percent), which peaks in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This likely reflects debates following the increased use of quantitative methods. This cluster includes work on best practices, but also a number of comments-and-replies on methodological or measurement disagreements (e.g., Segal and Knoke 1969; Gibbs 1968; Johnson 1973). Articles in this cluster include: "Spuriousness Versus Intervening Variables" (Blalock 1962), "On Ordinal Prediction Problems" (Mayer and Good 1974), and "Measurement Issues in the Study of Social Change" (Presser 1990). While impossible to know from these data exactly, we expect that the later decline of this cluster is more due to the founding of methods-specific journals rather than a loss of interest in the field (e.g., *Sociological Methodology* was founded in 1969 and *Sociological Methods & Research* in 1972).

Continuous Coverage: Core Topics with Steady Representation

While the average publication age for the following clusters is in the 1980s and 1990s, they feature no clear temporal peaks and, therefore, are characterized by a steady representation as topical touchstones. As such, our discussion focuses on their relational organization as represented in figure 1.

Civil Society, Power, Politics & Organizations. The lower right of figure 1 includes a handful of topics that are all broadly concerned with civil society and social organization. The largest and most tightly-knit of these topics is **religion** (4.8 percent). The topical coherence of this cluster is indicated by how compactly the papers reside in a single area of the figure. The most common shared terms in this cluster are "religious," "religion," "church," "Protestant," and "belief." Works here cover the gamut of religious studies, with titles such as "The Minister: Professional Man of the Church" (Chapman 1944), "Conventional Religion and Political Participation in Postwar Rural Japan" (Shupe 1977), "The Semi-involuntary Institution Revisited – Regional Variations in Church Participation Among Black-Americans" (Ellison and Sherkat 1995), or "Happiness in Hard Times: Does Religion Buffer the Negative Effect of Unemployment on Happiness?" (Hastings and Rosser 2020).

Adjacent to the religion cluster is the cluster on **voluntary associations** (1.5 percent), although "social capital" might be a somewhat broader, if less literal label. The most common terms include: "voluntary," "voluntary association," "participation," "membership," "civic association," and "networks." Papers include very specific examinations of voluntary associations, such as

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"Dimensions of Participation in Voluntary Associations" (Evan 1957), "Secret Societies and Social Structure" (Erickson 1981), or "Voluntary Association Membership and Social Cleavages" (Park and Subramanian 2012). As the secular mirror to studies of religion, this cluster includes broader general social theory work, such as "Evolution On a Dancing Landscape: Organizations and Networks in Dynamic Blau Space" (McPherson and Ranger-Moore 1991) or "Power and Social Structure in Community Elites" (Gould 1989). The cluster has strong ties to "networks," "religion," and "politics."

The focus on power, community cohesion, and trust creates a link with work on **social exchange** (3.3 percent). Papers in this cluster include terms such as "exchange," "power," "actor," "experiment," and "status." Generally, the titles comport to what we would expect, with works such as "The Value of Exchange" (Molm, Peterson, and Takahashi 2001) or "Lines of Power in Exchange Networks" (Lucas et al. 2001). But because of the strong experimental paradigm in the social exchange field and the explicit focus on status, we also find papers here that are using experimental methods for other substantive topics (particularly work on game theory) or other methods used to study status. For example, "Getting a Laugh: Gender, Status, and Humor in Task Discussions" (Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2001) or "The Dynamics of Prosocial Leadership: Power and Influence in Collective Action Groups" (Harrell and Simpson 2016). Earlier work in this area is linked by "status," "small groups," or experimental design terms, such as "Status Congruency as a Variable in Small Group Performance" (Adams 1953) or "Realism in Laboratory Simulation: Myth Or Method?" (Drabek and Haas 1967).

If religion, voluntary association and status-exchange work hint at informal organization of power and trust in society, the clusters on "organizations" and "politics" focus more directly on formal structures of power and its contestation. The **organizations** (2.8 percent) cluster is a bit more heterogeneous owing to the various contexts within which the term "organization" is used. Most common terms in this cluster are "organizational" (adjective, adverb), "organization" (noun), "competition," "industry," "bureaucratic," and "formal." But also common are terms such as "power" and "authority." Central titles here include "Bureaucracy's Other Face" (Page 1946), "Irrational Leadership in Formal Organizations" (Josephson 1952), "Prestige and Goals in American Universities" (Abbott 1974), "The Organization of Survival – Women's and Racial-ethnic Voluntarist and Activist Organizations" (Minkoff 1993), and "Organizational Liminality and Interstitial Creativity The Fellowship of Power" (Lindsay 2010). The cluster bridges politics via terms such as "power" and shares "organization" with many church and voluntary association papers.

The **politics** (4.1 percent) cluster, much as "religion" and "crime," is among the most internally distinct clusters in the set. High-loading terms in this cluster include: "political," "party," "democracy," "politics," "vote," and "government." Papers in it have an obvious connection to political sociology, such as "A Conceptual Scheme for the Sociological Analysis of Election Campaigns" (Sutton 1953), "A Causal Synthesis of Sociological and Psychological Models of American Voting Behavior" (Knoke 1974), or "Political Polarization and Long-Term

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Change in Public Support for Environmental Spending" (Johnson and Schwadel 2019). The strongest cross-links with other areas include "globalization," "social movements and voluntary associations" to the north of figure 1 and "work and labor" via "politics" around unions to the south and west of figure 1.

Social Stratification. Stratification has always been a core interest and topics in this region build off of the earlier work on class and occupational structure, though differentiated across multiple subareas that focus on more specific problems than traditional writing on social class. As such, we find a set of clusters on "income Inequality," "work and labor," and "gender inequality" in the central-left region of figure 1.

The **income inequality** (2.1 percent) cluster has largely picked up where the occupational prestige cluster started to wane. "Income inequality" is the most prominent term in this cluster (appearing 5 times as often as the next two common terms "wealth" and "earnings"). The works here represent an explicit focus on inequality and the social processes and conditions that create it, such as "The City as a System Generating Income Equality" (Betz 1972) and "The Impact of Diminishing Discrimination on the Internal Size Distribution of Black Income" (Villemez and Wiswell 1978). The 1980s and 1990s see a rise in cross-national work on income inequality: "Structured Inequality, Conflict, and Control: A Cross-National Test of the Threat Hypothesis" (Williams and Timberlake 1984) or "Cross-National Determinants of Income Inequality" (Crenshaw 1992). While the field is broad, recent work appears to be more focused on micro-level comparisons and explaining the processes that drive income inequality, such as "Lawyers' Lines of Work: Specialization's Role in the Income Determination Process" (Leahey and Hunter 2012) or "Falling Behind: The Role of Inter- and Intragenerational Processes in Widening Racial and Ethnic Wealth Gaps through Early and Middle Adulthood" (Killewald and Bryan 2018).

As occupational prestige gave way to income inequality, so too class has been largely taken over by research on **work and labor** (3.7 percent). The two most prominent terms in this cluster are "worker" and "job," which occur 3 to 4 times more often than the next terms "employment," "workplace," and "organizational." The topic has been on a slow-but-steady rise since the 1940s and its focus has been largely on unpacking what some of the early work on class meant but also digging into the conditions and consequences of work, such as "Social Origins, Occupational Advice, Occupational Values, and Work Careers," (Simpson and Simpson 1962), "Individual Voice on the Shop Floor: The Role of Unions" (Hodson 1997,) and "The Hidden Costs of Contingency: Employers' Use of Contingent Workers and Standard Employees' Outcomes" (Pedulla 2013).

Social problems

Social Forces has had a continued interest in publishing papers on social problems research, represented largely in the north-west region of figure 1, covering crime, deviance, neighborhoods, and residential segregation, bounded by concerns focused on suicide and education.

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The study of **crime** (5.2 percent) has appeared in *Social Forces* since the earliest papers in our corpus, including titles such as "Some Principles of Criminal Typology" (Lindesmith and Warren 1941) or "Research Note on Inter- and Intra-Racial Homicides" (Garfinkel 1949), but representation increased in the 1970s and 1980s. Much of the work identifies patterns and correlates of criminal activity (e.g., "Sex Differences in Patterns of Adult Crime, 1965-77" (Steffensmeier 1980), "Ecological Variables in the Cross Cultural Study of Delinquency" (DeFleur 1967). The cluster includes debates on deterrence (e.g., Tittle and Rowe 1974; Grasmick, Jacobs, and McCollom 1983) and the death penalty (e.g., Bailey 1980; Unnever and Cullen 2007). There is deep concern with the effect of race and racism on crime and criminal justice, such as "Beyond Anomalies: Rethinking the Conflict Perspective on Race and Criminal Punishment" (Hawkins 1987) and "Race, Crime, and Public Housing in Atlanta" (McNulty and Holloway 2000).

Crime is strongly linked to place and combined with the core interest in race, crime, and policing, it is perhaps unsurprising that we find research on both **neighborhoods and deviance** (1 percent) and **residential segregation** (2.4 percent) in this area of the map that bridges crime and race. The work on neighborhood and deviance is more recent than that on crime in general with most work starting in the 1970s and 1980s. Residential segregation literature is a little older, but early papers are fairly rare and otherwise grows in the 1960s and 1970s. Representative titles include "Why Does It Take a Village? The Mediation of Neighborhood Effects on Educational Achievement" (Ainsworth 2002) and "Hypermobility, Destination Effects, and Delinquency: Specifying the Link between Residential Mobility and Offending" (Vogel, Porter, and McCuddy 2017). Residential segregation papers are, understandably, more specific, centering questions on race and housing throughout the period, such as "Ethnic Congregation Segregation, Assimilation, and Stratification" (Beshers, Laumann, and Bradshaw 1964), "The Effects of Race and Socioeconomic Status on Residential Segregation in Texas, 1970-80" (Hwang, Murdock, and Parpia 1985), and "Inter-neighborhood Migration and Spatial Assimilation in a Multi-ethnic World" (South, Crowder, and Pais 2008), while more recent papers, such as "The Context of Voting: Does Neighborhood Ethnic Diversity Affect Turnout?" (Bhatti, Danckert, and Hansen 2017), also examine the consequences of residential segregation on outcomes, such as well-being and voting. The language used to describe criminal activity is somewhat different for youth—often including a more health/medicalization tone—which is taken up directly in the cluster "adolescence and delinquency" (see below).

Demography (1 percent) and population topics have been represented throughout the periods covered in this corpus, with, for example, early papers on kinship structure in the US South. The demographic work published in *Social Forces* covers most of the field, though given the uniqueness of language our method splits out work on **migration** (2.9 percent). The most common terms in the demography cluster are "fertility," "birth," "age," and "population." The migration cluster is narrower than demography per se, characterized by terms such as "migration," "migrant," "rural," and "net migration." Titles in the

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demography cluster include "Fertility of the Village Residents of Oklahoma" (Belcher 1946), "Theories of Fertility as Guides to Population Policy" (Burch 1975), and "Race Differences in Cohort Effects on Non-Marital Fertility in the United States" (Stockard et al. 2009). Migration papers are fairly specific, including "Distance and Direction as Vectors of Internal Migration, 1935 to 1940" (Price 1948) or "Southerners in the West: The Relative Well-Being of Direct and Onward Migrants" (Tolnay and Eichenlaub 2006). The demography and migration clusters are distinct from the **immigration** (3.3 percent) cluster, which tends to focus on ethnicity and assimilation, such as "Structural Assimilation, Ethnic Group Membership, and Political Participation Among Japanese Americans" (Fugita and O'Brien 1985) or "A Distorted Nation: Perceptions of Racial/Ethnic Group Sizes and Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Other Minorities" (Alba, Rumbaut, and Marotz 2005). This focus on ethnicity and assimilation connects research in the immigration cluster to the race cluster, which is its nearest neighbor in the intellectual landscape, while demography and migration occupy more distant positions.

Two other social problems with a strong and continued presence in *Social Forces* are **suicide** (1.2 percent) and **education** (3.9 percent). The suicide cluster is something of a hybrid between papers focused on core theory questions about social organization and integration building on Durkheim (e.g., "Socioeconomic Development, Suicide and Religion: A Test of Durkheim's Theory of Religion and Suicide," Simpson and Conklin 1989) and core questions about the etiology of suicide as a practical social problem (e.g., "The Effects of War and Alcohol Consumption Patterns on Suicide: United States, 1910-1933," Wasserman 1989). There is also a tight-knit cluster on the debate around ecological causes of suicide, including the (in)famous exchange on country music and suicide (Stack and Gundlach 1992) which also has the unfortunate effect of pulling in (and thus misclassifying) some papers that might be better placed in "culture."

The education cluster is large and diverse, with a main divide between studies focusing on college versus those focusing on k-12 education; however, beyond this divide, the cluster generally foucses on equity (particularly around race and gender), effectiveness, and attainment. The topic has been of core concern throughout the period, though there are peaks of activity in the early 1960s and then starting again in the late 1990s and continuing to the present. The first peak seems to be largely associated with research relating aspirations and attainment or racial tensions surrounding schools and integration (e.g., Bertrand 1962; Searles and Williams 1962). The more recent peak seems to focus more directly on educational attainment questions and racial equity in school and effectiveness, often referencing the oppositional culture debate (Harris 2006; Diamond and Huguley 2014).

Family and adolescence

The final persistent set of topics center on family and adolescence, in the south-west portion of figure 1, including discussions of "adolescence and delinquency," "child and family," and "marriage and cohabitation." All are united by questions centered on children and youth.

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The cluster on **adolescence and delinquency** (1.2 percent) contains papers with "adolescence," "delinquency," and "peer" as the most common terms. These papers bridge concerns from the crime and deviance cluster above with work on social networks, health, and family. Representative titles include "The Protective Environment and Adolescent Socialization" (Westly and Elkin 1957), "Adolescent Involvement in Legal and Illegal Drug Use" (Kandel al. 1976), "Evaluating the Role of 'Nothing to Lose' Attitudes on Risky Behavior in Adolescence" (Harris, Duncan, and Boisjoly 2002), and "Religiousness, Social Networks, Moral Schemas, and Marijuana Use" (Hoffman 2014).

The **child and family** (2.9 percent) and **marriage and cohabitation** (3.9 percent) clusters heavily overlap with the adolescence and deviance cluster and the two clusters on gender (see below). The most common terms in the marriage and cohabitation cluster are "marriage," "marital," and "divorce" followed by a set of closely related terms. This topical area has been of steady concern over the period under investigation, including "War and Marriage" (Panunzio 1943), "Marital Agreement as a Function of Status-Related Agreement" (Bennet 1971), and "Education, Labor Markets and the Retreat from Marriage" (Harknett and Kuperberg 2011). The child and family cluster uses the terms "child," "parent," "parental," and "mother" most frequently and works are fairly coherently organized on either the role of children in general family processes or ways to address problems in child development and education. Examples include "Parents as The Makers of Social Deviates" (Bonney 1941), "Adolescent Perceptions of Conjugal Power" (Bahr, Bowerman, and Gecas 1974), or "Maternal Education and the Unequal Significance of Family Structure for Children's Early Achievement" (Augustine 2014).

Areas of Rapid Recent Growth

The distribution of topics found in *Social Forces* has seen a few areas with fairly substantial recent growth. Some of these are clearly related to earlier work—such as the small but very recent work on **incarceration** (0.3 percent) and imprisonment—while others appear to fill gaps more independent of prior research.

Like race, research on gender is found across the intellectual field, with papers discussing gender/sex in almost every cluster (see Appendix figure A3.2). But research focused directly on gender has grown substantially in recent years and our text network approach uncovers two distinct clusters of such work. The first is on **gender and inequality** (2.5 percent) and bridges the research on "marriage and cohabitation;" "family and children" discussed above to the labor and economic inequality issues discussed in the "work and labor" and "income inequality" clusters. Work here is largely focused on the gender wage gap (cf. Jacobs and Steinberg 1990; Dinovitzer, Reichman, and Sterling 2009; Murphy and Oesch 2016) or hiring differences (Wolf and Rosenfeld 1978; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993; Mun 2010), with the most common terms being "woman," "earnings," "sex," "gender," "wage," and "gap". The second cluster focused on **gender and household labor** (2.2 percent) centers on gender inequity

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within households, with many papers on the gender division of labor and related problems. The most common terms in this cluster are "gender," "woman," "hour," and "housework." This cluster captures many papers on the position of women in society more generally, with works such as "The Adequacy of Women's Expectations for Adult Roles" (Rose 1951), "Women, Men, and the Division of Power" (Cubbins 1991), and "Flexible Work, Flexible Penalties: The Effect of Gender, Childcare, and Type of Request on the Flexibility Bias" (Munsch 2016).

At the intersection of work on adolescents, family, gender, and education are a growing body of work on **health** (3.2 percent). This is a diverse cluster, though it admits to a rough division between mental health and physical health. The most common terms here are "health," "mental," and "mortality" followed by terms relating particular types of health ("physical," "psychiatric") or medicalization features ("patient," "medical"). Titles include "A Cooperative Program for Rural Medical Care" (Smith 1944), "The Relationship Between Sex Roles, Marital Status, and Mental Illness" (Gove 1972), and "Pathways of Health and Human Capital from Adolescence into Young Adulthood" (Kane et al. 2018).

Recent growth in the "power and politics" side of figure 1 is in the areas of **globalization** (2.7 percent) and **social movements** (3 percent). Research on globalization increased dramatically in the 1990s and 2000s, not coincidentally mirroring wider internationalization of social life. The most common terms in this cluster are "international," "global," "country," and "globalization" followed by terms relating these features to specific outcomes such as democracy, trade, and environment and human rights. Cluster-representative papers include "Environmentalism, Globalization and National Economies, 1980-2000" (Schofer and Granados 2006) and "Globalization and Industrialization in 64 Developing Countries" (Kaya 2010). This cluster echoes long-standing concerns over the world system (see Nolan and White 1983; Prell et al. 2014).

While there have been papers published on **social movements** in *Social Forces* over most of its history, the most recent decades have seen rapid growth in this area as well. The content of this cluster is characterized by terms such as "protest" (most common term by far), followed by "mobilization," "collective," and "political." The papers are united in their foucs on collective action and protest, while the topic of protest varies from the environment to civil rights, to inequality. Representative titles include "Political Trials and Resource Mobilization" (Barkan 1980), "Political-Development of Sixties Activists—Identifying the Influence of Class, Gender and Socialization on Protest Participation" (Sherkat and Blocker 1994), and "All the Right Movements? Mediation, Rightist Movements, and Why US Movements Received Extensive Newspaper Coverage" (Amenta and Elliott 2017).

The last cluster that has seen rapid growth is on **social networks** (2.2 percent). While formal structural and social network research here has appeared in *Social Forces* across many substantive domains for some time (See Appendix A3.4), as represented by the well-known work of Mayhew (1980, 1981), a distinct cluster of papers on social network methods and links between networks and behavior stretches across the middle-left of figure 1, bridging work on "adolescence and

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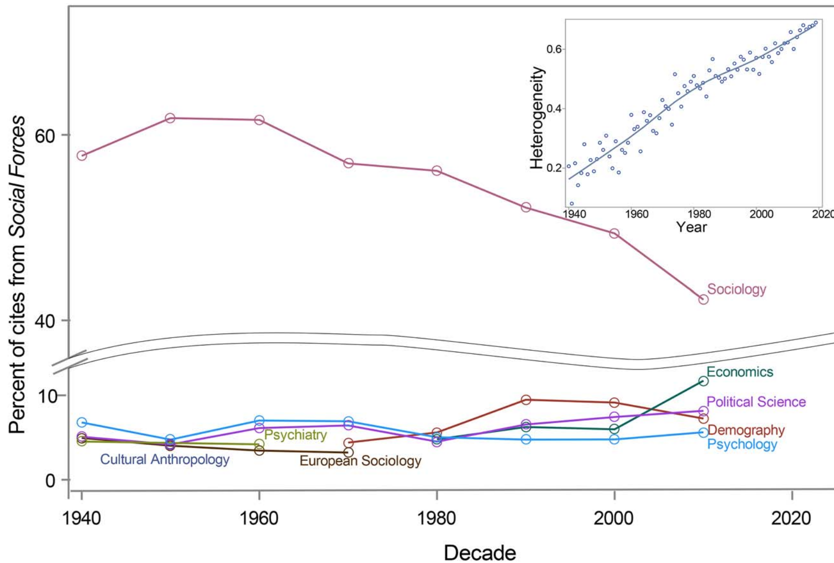
Figure 2. Disciplinary Heterogeneity Over Time.



Note: *Main figure*: Percentage of cited references from *Social Forces* papers to journals in selected disciplines. *Inset*: Blau heterogeneity index for out-citation disciplinary membership. Heterogeneity $h = 1 - \sum_k p_k^2$, where p is the proportion of references to discipline k within each decade.

delinquency" and "health" on the one hand, and voluntary associations on the other. The most common terms in this cluster are "network," "friendship," and "social network," and titles include "Close Friendship Relations of Housewives Residing in an Urban Community" (Williams 1958), "Positions in Multiple Network Systems" (parts 1 and 2; Burt 1977a, 1977b), and "Inequality Preservation Through Uneven Diffusion of Cultural Materials Across Stratified Groups" (Gondal 2015).

Whom Do Social Forces Authors Cite?

Clustering the text is a direct way to examine what authors discuss, but a common alternative in bibliometrics is to examine whom they cite: scholars build on the works of others, and the core papers and disciplines cited by *Social Forces* authors indicate what work serves as building blocks. To examine this, we examine the references for each paper (limited to the WoS corpus) and parse the cited reference for author and journal.

The first question we ask is whether the disciplinary citation patterns have changed over time. To do so, we link each cited journal to its representative discipline as classified by WoS.[5] Figure 2 gives the disciplinary citation trends over time.

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As we would expect, the largest target for out-citations from *Social Forces* is to other sociology journals, comprising about 60 percent of the total in the 1940s and 1950s. While always the largest target, sociology lost its majority recently, dropping to about 43 percent of all citations. This decline in citations to sociology reflects the rise of interdisciplinary work, and we see that economics, political science, demography, and psychology are the most commonly cited adjacent disciplines, having displaced anthropology and psychiatry in the early periods. If we pool across all disciplines over time, we can examine the total disciplinary heterogeneity of out-citations, which is given in the inset of figure 3. It shows that, if one randomly chooses two journal citations in the 1940s, you would have had about a 20 percent chance of selecting different disciplines, while today, this chance tops 60 percent.

The extent of interdisciplinary sourcing varies somewhat across topical areas. Most of the trends are as we would expect, with clusters focusing on "health" and "demography" most likely to cite demography papers; "politics" and "social movements" most likely to cite political science; "work, organizations and inequality" field most likely to cite economics; and social exchange, "race," and "methods" most likely to cite psychology.

While discipline captures the broad swath of sociologists' interests, particular works shed light on the problems that motivate researchers. Figure 3 provides the top 20 works most cited by *Social Forces* authors.

As a general sociology journal with a highly diverse topical coverage, it should come as little surprise that no single work dominates the field. From all the papers in *Social Forces*, the most-cited work has been mentioned by only 140 unique papers. Still, the distribution in the top 20 nicely captures the core issues that drive sociological investigation. Peter Blau is the author most referenced by *Social Forces*, with three works in the top 20 (#1: *American Occupational Structure* (1967) with O. D. Duncan, #7 *Inequality and Heterogeneity* (1977), and #12 *Exchange and Power* (1964)). Questions of racial inequality and integration are highly cited, with Wilson's (1987) *Truly Disadvantaged* at #2 and Massey's and Denton's (1993) *American Apartheid* at #6, Blalock's (1967) *Toward a Theory of Minority Group Relations* at #5, and Gordon's (1964) *Assimilation in American Life* at #15. The mid-20th century dominance of functionalist approaches is apparent with Merton and Parsons at #3 and #4, respectively. Concerns over gender inequality are seen in Kanter's (1977) classic, tied for #8 with Hirschi's (1969) seminal work on crime and delinquency. Research on social movements is represented by McCarthy's and Zald's (1977) paper on resource mobilization and Tilly's (1978) *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Work on organizations and institutions come in at #12 Meyer's and Rowan's 1977 paper on "Institutionalized Organizations" and #17 DiMaggio's and Powell's 1983 paper on "The Iron Cage Revisited." Granovetter's (1973) "Strength of Weak Ties" (#16) and Coleman's (1988) work on "Social Capital" (#12) point to the wide-ranging roles of social networks. Coleman is the second person with multiple appearances in the top 20, with his *Foundations* (1990) (#19). Featherman's and Hauser's (1978) classic *Opportunity and Change* (#18) highlight the initial concerns with inequality expressed in the *American Occupational Structure*. Finally,

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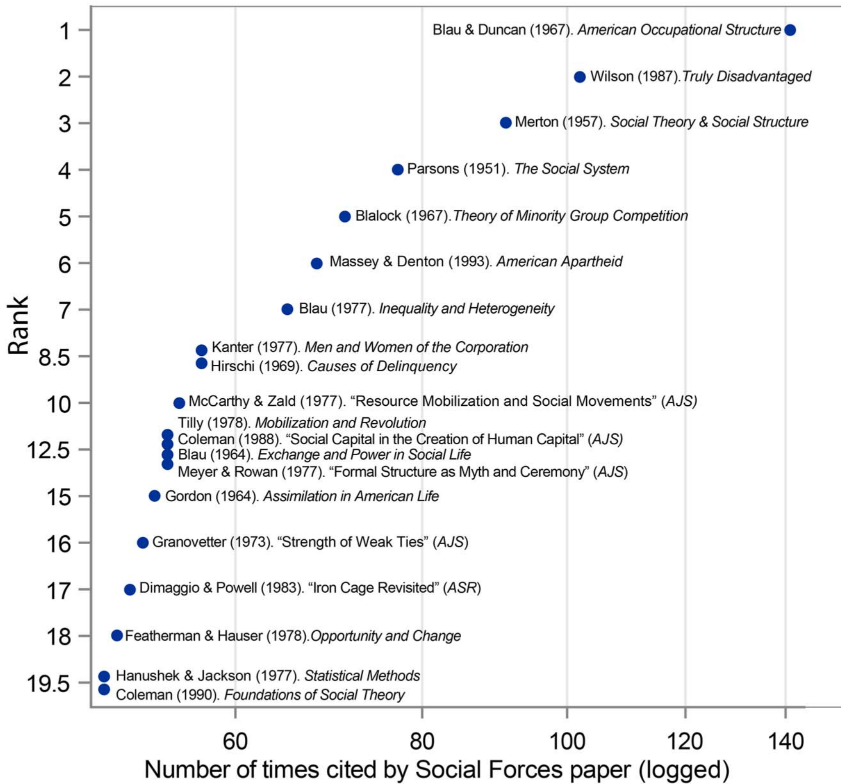
Figure 3. Works Most-Cited by *Social Forces* Authors.



Note: Top-20 most-cited works by *Social Forces* authors; count is the number of papers that cite the work at least once.

Hanushek and Jackson (1977) (#19) is a popular textbook relevant to quantitative methods questions.

Some authors are cited more for a wider body of work than any particular piece. For example, there are no works of Durkheim in the top 20 (*Suicide* (Durkheim 1897 [1951]) comes in at #25), but he is the 5th most cited author overall. Other noted scholars in the top-50 cited authors include: Parsons (#3), Weber (#8), Bourdieu (#20), Goffman (#26), and Homans (#30).[6]

How Have Social Forces Articles Changed over Time?

As we have shown above, the topical work and theoretical sources for works published in *Social Forces* shifted over its first century. In the next section, we examine changes in sociological production by examining collaboration, location, author gender, and stylistic shifts.

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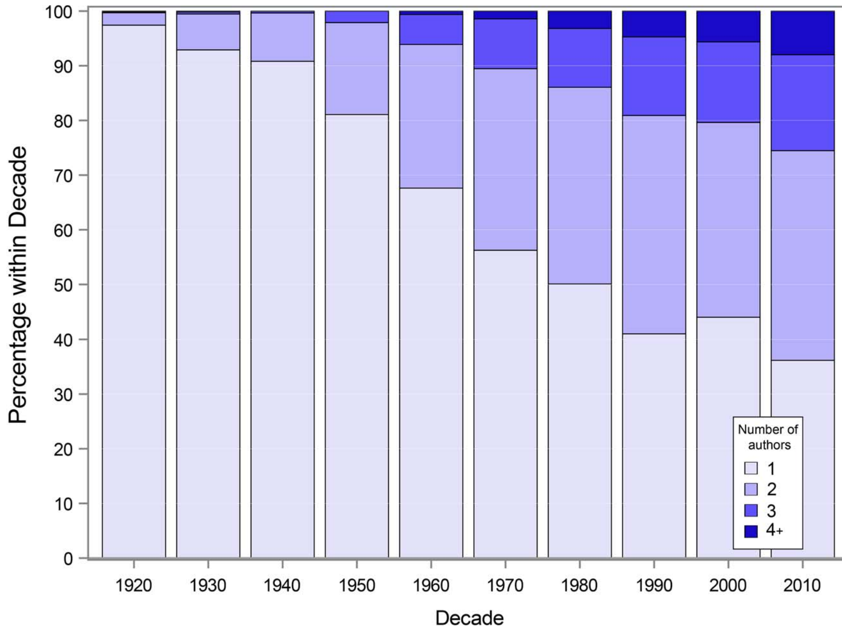
Figure 4. Author Team Size Over Time, by Decade.



Note: Each bar segment represents the proportion of papers in that decade with 1, 2, 3, or 4 or more authors.

Collaboration

Perhaps, the most dramatic change in authorship has been the rapid rise of team production (Wuchty, Jones, and Uzzi 2007). Figure 4 shows the distribution of authorship team size over time.

The vast majority of early papers were sole-authored, with a steady decline over time. By the 1980s, only half of papers were sole-authored dropping to about 40% today. Teams tend to be small and the majority of co-authored papers have 2 or 3 authors, but we are seeing recent growth in the number of papers with 4 or more authors. This trend varies somewhat by topic but is nowhere counter to the overall trend; differences are found mainly only in terms of the speed and the start of the growth.

Location

As an English language journal with a long association with the US South, *Social Forces* largely published works of US authors for much of its history, but this too has changed. One need only peruse the latest volumes to see that we now commonly find papers with international authors on issues of global importance. Figure 5 depicts the overall shift in non-US authors from 1970 to 2020.[7]

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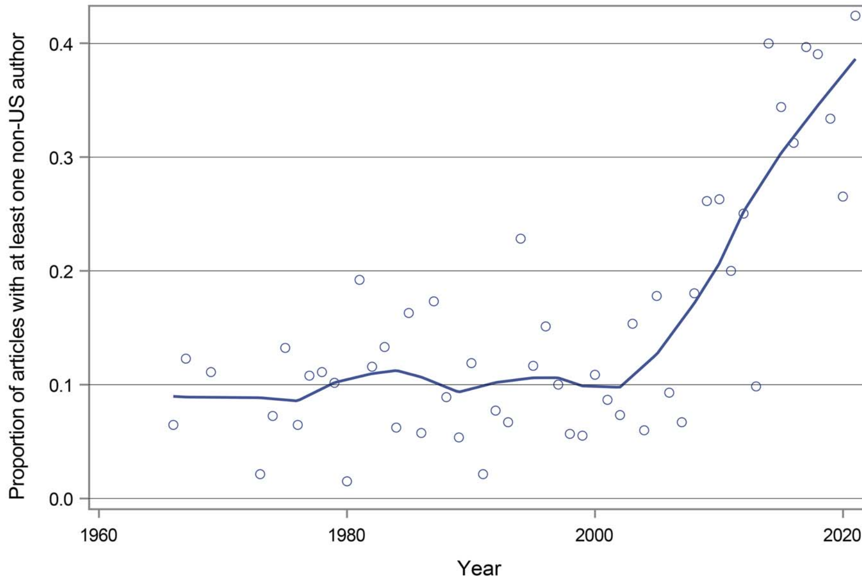
Figure 5. Growth in Non-US Authorship.



Note: Points represent the proportion of addresses listed on papers each year with a non-US address. As address listing is inconsistent, the sample limited to years where at least 20 papers had matchable addresses. Line is LOESS regression line.

The trend in international authorship remained flat from 1970 to 2000, but in the last 20 years, has increased dramatically. Now, about one third of *Social Forces* papers include international authors. The distribution of countries represented by these international authors is wide, covering more than 50 different countries, including Canada (20 percent), England (11 percent), Netherlands (9 percent), Germany (8 percent), China (4 percent), Spain (3 percent), and Japan (2 percent).

Gender[8]

Sociology as a whole has become more gender balanced over time, crossing the 50/50 split in the American Sociological Association in 2003, with the current balance at 54 percent of members self-identifying as women, 44 percent as men, and 2 percent as a nonbinary identity.

Figure 6 shows that the gender distribution of authors' names in our corpus follows a broadly similar trend, though male names are still more common than female names at about 60 percent, perhaps being indicative of lag effects in disciplinary gatekeeping and/or more subtle mismatches between elite journal publications and gendered substantive areas (Light 2013). Interestingly, the gender balance was better early in the series (around 1920–1945) than it was in the middle (around 1945–1980). The proportion male peaked around 1965 with

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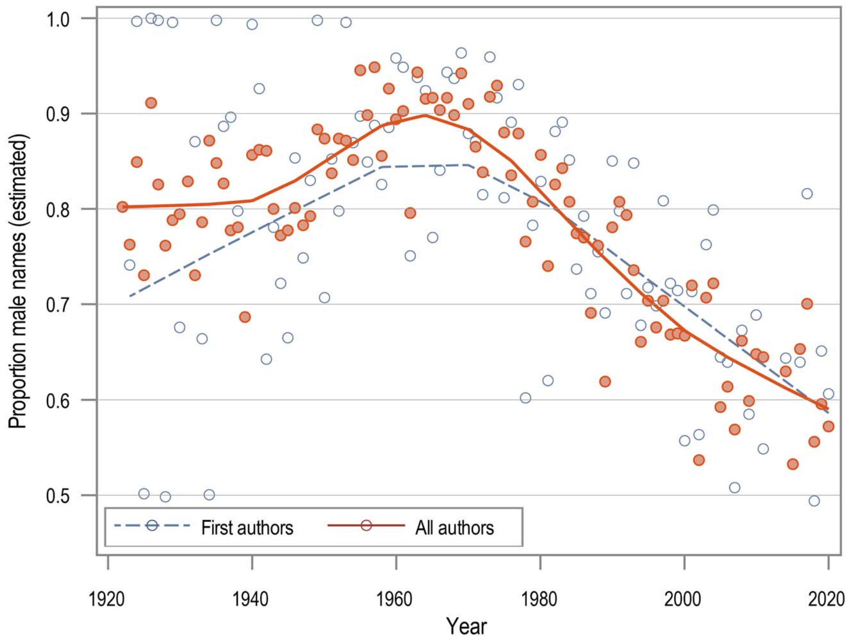
Figure 6. Proportion of Authors with Typically Male Names.



Note: Sample limited to authors with full first names that could be matched to gender-by-name distribution databases (i.e., social security records). Line is LOESS regression line.

many years having nearly 90 percent male authors, which has declined steadily since (see Kalleberg and Newell 2022) for comparison to the *American Journal of Sociology* and the *American Sociological Review*).

Looking within papers, authorship teams vary in their gender composition: men sole-author papers more often than women, though most of this difference is due to field composition (see Appendix figure A4.1 for model details)—males were more likely to be authors when sole-authored papers were common. Still, the proportion of sole-authored female papers is slightly lower than expected by chance (16.4 percent observed vs. 18.5 percent expected). As team size grows, the gender composition effects become somewhat starker, with large all-female teams appearing in the data more often than we would expect by chance. For example, all female teams comprise 6.2 percent of 3-person teams compared with 2.7 percent expected by chance and 7.8 percent of 4+ sized teams, compared with 2.1 percent expected by chance.

Writing Style

Next, we turn our attention to stylistic shifts during the first century of *Social Forces*. It can be fun to read sociological papers from the 1920s and 1930s as

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they feel, at least tonally, often more conversational and generally less guarded. Capturing that sort of tonality is exceedingly difficult, but we can get some hints with the broad bibliometric features of the works. Figure 7 provides a simple example: the number of words in the title of the article (see Moody 2006).

Papers in the 1920s and 1930s had titles that averaged around 7 words; nearly doubling to over 13 today. This trend holds true across subfields, though fields differ significantly in how wordy their titles are. Early papers tended to have titles that reflected broad coverage of a topic, such as "Adult Parole" (Witmer 1925) or "Play in Rural Life" (Anderson 1925), while contemporary papers tend to be very specific, "Prejudice, Contact, and Threat at the Diversity-Segregation Nexus: A Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Analysis of How Ethnic Out-Group Size and Segregation Interrelate for Inter-Group Relations" (Laurence et al. 2019) or attempts at being catchy or humorous "When Will They Every Learn That 1st Derivatives Identify the Effects of Continuous Independent Variables or 'Officer, You Can't Give Me a Ticket, I wasn't Speeding for an Entire Hour.'" (Roncek 1993). The trend is not iron-clad, of course, and some contemporary authors exhibit concision (e.g., "Why Monogamy" (Kanazawa and Still 2020) or "Models and Indicators" (Land 2001)).

The average length of bibliographies has similarly grown dramatically from about 5 references in the 1920s to nearly 70 now. This trend holds across subfields, though, as with title length, for some more than others. Finally, across all subfields, *Social Forces* papers are getting longer overall (mean in 1920s: 4.9 pages; 1960s: 7.2 pages; 2010s: 27.3 pages).

What Gets Recognized in Social Forces?

Last, we ask what gets recognized in *Social Forces*? This recognition is the opposite side of Merton's (1993) famous adoption of Newton's "standing on the shoulder of giants" when talking about scholarly cumulation. Moving beyond our prior discussion of whose work is influential to *Social Forces*, we examine the influence of particular *Social Forces* articles (and scholars) beyond the journal. We start by looking at the most highly cited works across time, then dig deeper into the trends asking how the features described above are associated with greater recognition.[9]

Most recognized works

Figure 8 provides the most-cited papers published in *Social Forces* overall (for the most-cited papers by decade, see Appendix A5). The most-cited papers in *Social Forces* history generally define a core concept for sociological research, providing either methodological or theoretical clarification of a general feature that is of interest to many sociologists. For example, "Trust as a Social Reality" by Lewis and Wiegert (1985), the most-cited paper, refines the concept of trust for modern sociological examinations arguing that it is essential for understanding

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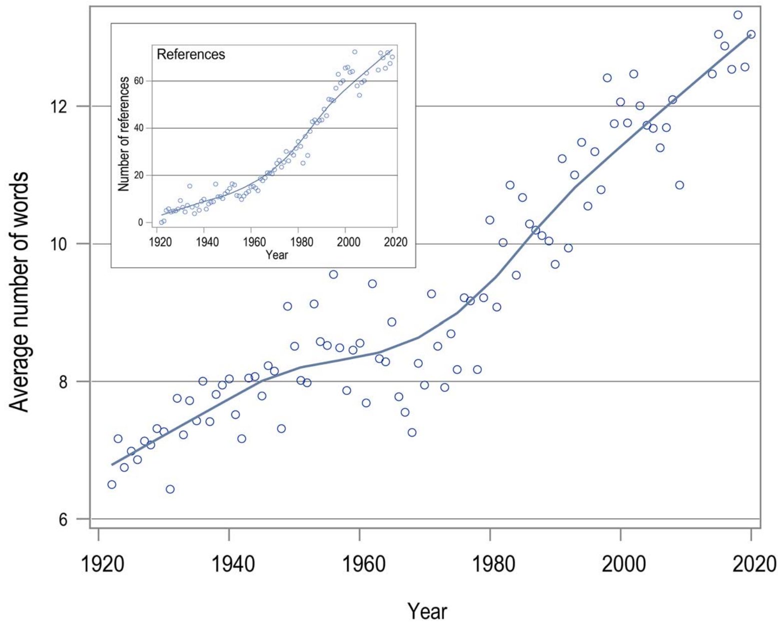
Figure 7. Paper Structure Trends: Title Length and Reference Count.



Note: *Main figure:* Points represent the average length of paper titles published in each year. *Inset:* Points are the average number of items listed in each paper's references each year. Line in both is LOESS regression line.

classic questions of social order. The work has spawned a wide-ranging literature across social exchange, community, networks, globalization, and politics. Massey and Denton (1988, #2) provide theoretical clarification on aspects of residential segregation, putting forward "5 distinct axes of measurement." Steensland et al. (2000, #3) provide clarity on how to categorize American religious denominations. LaPiere (1934, #5) makes theoretical clarifications in a core debate on the role of actions versus attitudes in sociology. Marsden and Campbell (1984, #6) offer guidance on how to measure tie strength in survey studies of social networks. Gold (1958, #7) explicates field work roles from complete participant to complete observer. Breiger (1974a, #9) advances a theoretical perspective on how people's memberships co-constitute social communities and personal identities via a now widely used concept of duality. Zald and Ash (1966, #12) provide a new, more generalized theory of social movement organizations, focusing attention on the organizational necessities of social movements. McNeal (1999, #15) develops a theoretical account of when parental involvement matters for education outcomes. Merton's (1940, #14) work on bureaucratic structure defines well-functioning bureaucracies and how people fit into them. Meyer and Minkoff (2004, #13) develop a new set

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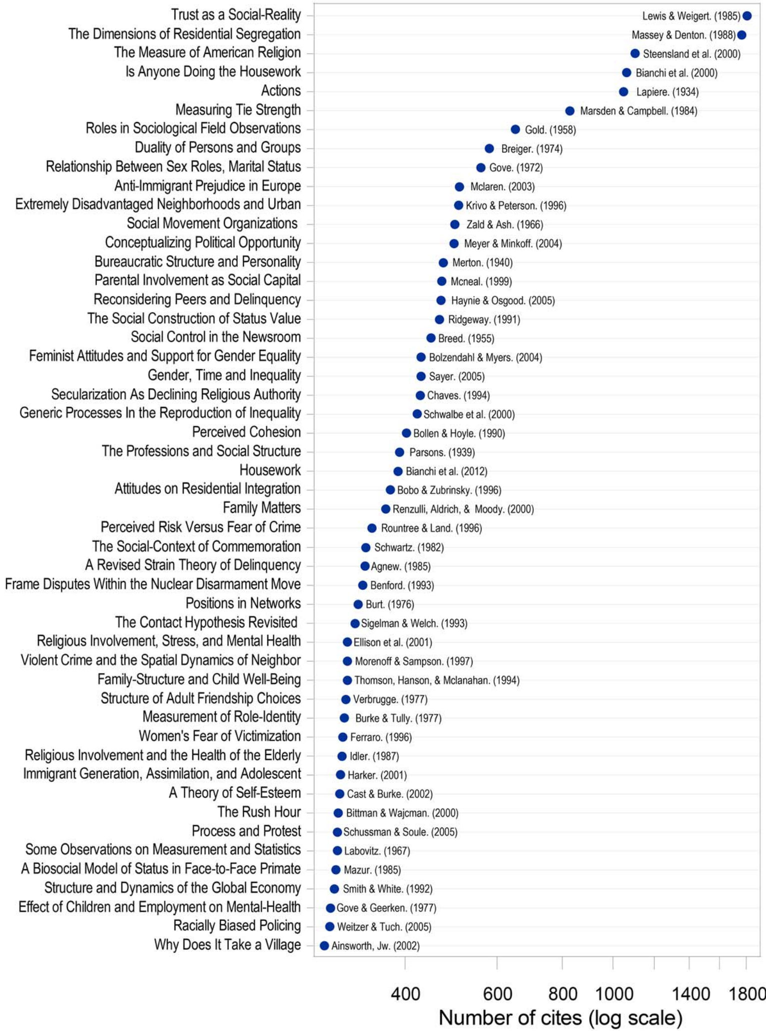
Figure 8. Most-Cited *Social Forces* Papers, 1922–2022.



Note: Cites from WoS Core Collection "Times Cited" field, as of March 2022. Titles limited to 50 characters or first punctuation.

of ideas on political opportunity structures, summarizing and clarifying a broad prior literature.

Another way to get into the most-cited set seems to frame a clear but perhaps surprising empirical finding as a puzzle worth solving. For example, Bianchi et al. (2000, #4) documents the decline in total housework over time using time-diary data (this is also often cited as an archetype for time-use diary data in general). Gove (1972, #9) is a core citation for the sources of gender differences in mental-health outcomes. Krivo and Peterson (1996, #11) test Wilson's (1987)

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hypotheses on structural sources of crime and has become a touchstone cite on the criminological effects of concentrated disadvantage. McLaren (2003, #10) tests competing hypotheses for anti-immigration feelings and finds that, net of perceived conflict, personal contacts are effective at mitigating feelings of exclusion and threat. Haynie and Osgood (2005, #16) take issue with long-standing concerns over peer influence on delinquency and, using then-new national data on students and their peers, show that peer effects are contingent on time spent with them.

The top 50 most-cited papers cover most of our topical subfields. The most-often cited area is "social networks" (5), followed by "crime," "gender and household labor," "health," and "social exchange" (4 each in the top 50), "religion" and "social movements" (3 each), and "adolescence and delinquency," "community," "organizations," and "residential segregation" (2 each).

Citation Correlates

Last, we turn our attention away from specific highly cited items to trends in recognition overall. Appendix table A6.1 provides details of the zero-inflated Poisson regression of citation count against a set of article-level covariates; here, we discuss the main trends from that model descriptively.

In terms of paper characteristics, structurally deep papers with succinct titles do best. As the number of references and page length increases, so too does the likelihood of being cited. At the same time, papers with shorter titles do better than those with longer ones; for example, an otherwise average paper with 5 words in the title receives an expected 40 citations, while one with 25 words only receives about 20 citations.

Papers with disciplinarily diverse references will generally garner more attention than those that focus on a single discipline as measured by the overall heterogeneity of the reference list. If we focus on the proportion of references that go to particular disciplines, we find that citing mainly sociology, political science, or economics will result in lower citations received, though papers that predominantly cite psychology or demography tend to garner a few more citations themselves than their other single-disciplinary referents. This might point to these subfields (social psychology, demography) having particularly well-bounded disciplinary questions, and therefore, papers engaging with those fields might also get noticed more.

Author composition is also associated with citation. Papers with a high proportion of male authors are cited less often than papers with female authors and large teams receive more citations than sole-authored papers. An average paper with 1 author will expect to receive about 37 citations, while a similar paper with 4 can expect around 50 citations.

Finally, the models indicate that net of authorship number, gender composition or paper structural features, and topical subfields differ significantly in the probability of being cited (see Figure 9).

The most highly cited areas in *Social Forces* are "gender and household labor," "adolescence and delinquency," "social networks," "residential segregation," "neighborhood deviance," and "crime." The least cited areas are, generally,

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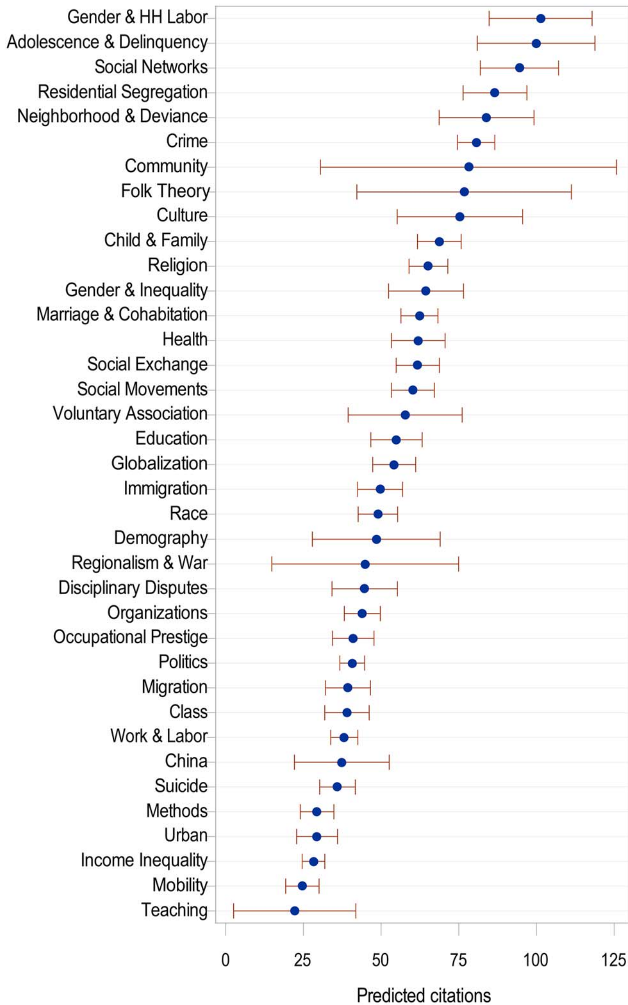
Figure 9. Citation Differences by Topical Subfield.



Note: Expected number of citations with 95 percent confidence intervals, based on zero-inflated Poisson regression model controlling for time, authorship, and paper structural features (see Appendix table A6.1 for details).

amongst the oldest—though this result is net of the curved time trend in the model. Papers on “teaching,” “mobility,” “income inequality,” “urban,” and “methods” are least cited overall. The rather low citation count for papers on “methods” is somewhat surprising, given the strong showing of methodological papers in the top-cited set and may imply a bifurcated effect with some of them doing very well and others not well at all.

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Summary and Conclusion

For the last century, *Social Forces* has consistently been at the forefront of sociological production. The discipline has seen significant changes in how papers are written, what people write about, and who they draw on for theoretical, methodological, and empirical inspiration.

The most-cited papers in *Social Forces* are well-known and deeply influential with top-cited papers from most of the discipline's subfields. Like authors in sociology writ large, *Social Forces* authors have become generally more verbose in their writing styles. Papers are longer, titles are longer, and authors are citing more prior work.

While *Social Forces* has always catered mainly to sociologists, the disciplinary heterogeneity of papers that authors draw on is now more cosmopolitan than it used to be. The discipline itself has become more diverse over time and so has *Social Forces*, with more women and international authors than in the past. Substantively, issues cover a wide range of topics, and over the last 100 years, *Social Forces* has increased its thematic breadth steadily even against a much deeper bench of competing specialty journals.

It is somewhat difficult to tell from this 30,000-foot overview precisely, and we look forward to each of the topic-specific expert reviews to learn more, but our intuition is that this reflects a deep need in sociology to speak across subfields. For the most part, authors that speak narrowly to a single topic are less likely to be cited (and, probably, less likely to be accepted in the first place). The growth of specialty journals has thus made a space for papers in the Journal to think more broadly and cover the interstices between specialties. This, we think, is why *Social Forces* has always been so much fun to read. We look forward to the next successful century.

Notes

1. It is important to note that clustering is mutually exclusive and exhaustive, so every paper is assigned to one cluster, which means that some clusters will contain papers that do not fit well but would also not fit anywhere else better. Similarly, papers that clearly bridge topics will be placed in one of their bridged topics.
2. As with any two-dimensional representation of a high-dimensional space, such visualizations are never perfect reflections of patterns in that space. In our case, almost every cluster has some level of cross-connection.
3. Representativeness is generally gauged by centrality and thus text-similarity within each cluster, though we also try to find exemplars that span the time distribution.
4. The most common terms include "college," "university," "teaching," student," "curriculum," "teach," "instruction," "education," "teacher," "department," "sociological," and "knowledge" though there is some explicit conflation between use of terms such as "student" as the object of research vs. using "students" or "classes" as a setting for studies.

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5. These counts only reflect citations to journals; as books cannot be placed within a discipline automatically.
6. Accountings of this sort for contemporary authors are complicated by collaborations, which are not well captured in WoS records. We focus on the number of times a name appears within a Social Forces bibliography, but WoS only reports 1st author names in the cited-reference information for a given publication.
7. The data on author home address are, unfortunately, somewhat incomplete. But, as a first check, we parsed the contact information and reprint-address fields for country of origin listed on the record. This often includes pooled addresses—if two authors are both from the same department, then only one address will be listed for both names. Still, it gives us evidence of the overarching trends in national origin. To ensure that we do not overweight odd cases, we only include years where at least 20 papers have either a contact or reprint address.
8. See Appendix A4 for more information on estimating gender from bibliometric data.
9. Citations are time-dependent, of course, and papers published in the most recent two decades have likely not had sufficient exposure to be fully cited (see general trends below). Many of the overall most-cited papers are therefore not the most-cited papers within a given decade. Moreover, WoS citation counts are internal to their indexes and as such typically do not match Google Scholar or other online indices, though they tend to be highly correlated.

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